Important!

Suspension Trauma

An emergency rescue plan MUST be prepared PRIOR to the use of harness and other fall restraint or fall arrest equipment. The rescue plan must be site specific.

Suspension Trauma

A person who is suspended in a harness runs the risk of shock and unconsciousness that may lead to death, due to blood flow insufficiency, in a short period of time.

When suspended in a harness, the legs are unable to maintain the normal “muscle pump” to maintain blood flow, allowing blood accumulation in lower part of the body. A conscious person suspended in a harness should be reminded to keep their legs moving, to help maintain blood flow.

A suspended person once rescued, must never be laid down, as the sudden return of blood flow may be life threatening. Always position with the upper body raised, moving from a kneeling or crouching position to a sitting position over time.

Always seek medical assistance in response to possible suspension trauma, as some signs and symptoms may not be immediately apparent.